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POLICY IDEALS FOR A REFORMED EDUCATION: POLICE STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL ATTITUDES IN A TIME OF CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines discrepancies between educational objectives expressed in police vocational education policy and police recruits' views on knowledge and anticipatory occupational expectations. From a global perspective, police institutions in many countries are currently undergoing substantial professional reorientations in light of societal developments such as transforming demographics, increased societal diversity, changing public demands on police service delivery and crime patterns that are increasingly transnational and globalised. In sum, these developments have been suggested to be leading to increased complexity in the police's fulfilment of their professional obligations and new demands on police professional knowledge. In the context of police education, these shifts are visible on a policy level wherein experiential approaches to policing are increasingly substituted for problem-oriented and evidence-based policing which builds on theory, evaluation and utilisation of research. On the level of police educational curricula, traditional subjects, such as law enforcement, investigation and crime control, are increasingly complemented with subjects such as cultural awareness, communication and gender and diversity training. Given these broad developments, the present study investigates how the uptake of new educational ideas and practices is perceived by students undergoing police education. Previous research has put forth that educational content at variance with the occupational practices and culture of the police runs a considerable risk of being disapproved by police recruits and by extension has little or no impact on student learning. Drawing on a Swedish national survey (n=369) targeting Swedish police students in their fourth term of police education, the present paper investigates discrepancies between policy objectives and students' attitudes towards 'new' subjects. The survey measures students' values and attitudes towards different areas of police educational content. The results indicate that skill areas such as communication, flexibility and diversity are considered more important to emphasise in education by female students than male students. Based on the results, the authors discuss how ideas regarding policing which are promoted on a policy level may influence the development of new kinds of skills in police practice. Discrepancies between official rhetoric and police educational practice are discussed in terms of

how such gaps may counteract the development of new kinds of expertise and knowledge within the occupational community of the police.

POLICE RECRUITS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLICE EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

The following paper examines how police students value different types of educational content within the context of police basic training. We use empirical methods to demonstrate variations in students' values and discuss how differences with respect to gender may influence the development of new kinds of expertise and knowledge within the occupational community of the police.

Globally, many police institutions are currently undergoing substantial professional reorientations that are driven by a number of contemporary societal changes. A few examples include transforming demographics, increased societal diversity and changing public demands on police service delivery (Cox, 2011; Lauritz & Hansson, 2013). Transformations in the professional police community have also functioned as drivers for changes within police educational contexts (Jaschke, 2010; Jaschke & Neidhardt, 2007). In this regard, police education has—as is the case with many other vocations—undergone conceptual shifts from an emphasis on basic training where technical and operative skills are at the centre-stage towards a focus on education seen as a wider concept that incorporates theory, critical thinking and reflection. Shifts like these are not unique to the professional context of the police but can rather be located within a broader contemporary discourse of professional education in a 'learning society' that is characterised by endemic transformations (Field & Lynch, 2015; Nikolou-Walker & Meaklim, 2007).

In the following, we highlight three broad developments that follow in the wake of a changing field of professional education in general, and within police education in particular. These are shifts in educational content due to a need for new types of competencies; shifts in the institutional arrangements of professional educations; and shifts in regards of the groups of students that undergo professional education.

In regards of the first, European educational policy has emphasised the importance for educational institutions to foster lifelong learners that are ready to handle complexity and volatile task environments. In such endeavours, capacities and generic competences such as critical thinking and problem solving have been discussed as highly important (Becket & Hager, 2013). Specifically within the context of policing, the shift in educational content is evidenced through an emphasis on the importance of future police officers learning subjects such as ethics, human rights, social exclusion mechanisms, community orientation, communication, critical thinking and reflection (Jaschke, 2010; Paterson, 2011). As put forth by Marenin (2004) and Paterson (2011), changes in content are recurring subjects within police education policy due to a perceived need to provide the coming generations of police officers with knowledge and a 'conceptual apparatus' that is adjusted for increasingly complex task environments.

In addition to changes in curricula and educational content, shifts can also be identified in regards of the institutional arrangements of many professional educations. In this regard, police education shows similarities to, for instance, the recent development of nursing as an academic field (White & Heslop, 2012) as police

educational policy currently strongly advocates moves of the education closer to that found in higher education (HE) institutions. These moves are achieved through arrangements such as the establishment of police universities (Paterson, 2011) or university-based police programmes that are given as commissioned education at universities (Jaschke, 2010; Shipton, 2011; Wimshurst & Ransley, 2007). In general, the tendency to move vocational and professional educations closer to universities have been examined within the scholarly discussion (dependent on the chosen viewpoint) as either a trend of 'vocationalisation' of higher education institutions (see Powell, Graf, Bernhard, Coutrot, & Kieffer, 2012) or, conversely, as a trend of 'academisation' of professional educations (Ek, Ideland, Jönsson, & Malmberg, 2011). In either case, the consequences of these trends have been discussed in terms of increased convergence and fluidity among different types of adult educational systems.

In line with the changes presented above, professional education—and police education in particular—has also undergone changes in regards to the student groups who are admitted to education. In the scientific discussion of this topic, the attraction and admission of 'non-traditional' student groups into higher education has been discussed (Finnegan, Merrill, & Thunborg, 2014) and the general trend has been that higher education institutions have widened their admissions of student groups from other socio-demographic backgrounds than they traditionally accept. Within the context of police education, basic police training, which has traditionally been an almost exclusively male-oriented domain, now increasingly appeals to both female and male students. However, whilst increasing numbers of female police students indicate an increasingly open professional community, the bulk of research has shown that policing is highly gendered and characterised by a cultural hegemonic masculinity, which creates salient problems for female police officers in regards to discrimination and exclusion from full membership in the police occupation (Chan, Doran, & Marel, 2010; Metcalfe & Dick, 2002). This dynamic has been explained as dependent on traditional views that police work requires 'masculine' abilities such as strength, aggression and heroism (Prokos & Padavic, 2002).

With societal changes also follow changes in how people conceive themselves and what they regard as important in life. Research on changing values in Sweden indicates that some values are relatively stable over time, whereas others may increase or decrease in importance. For instance, in 1985, 41 per cent of Swedish citizens aged 15–29 considered equity to be a value of very great importance, whereas in 2000 the corresponding figure was 59 per cent for a comparable age group (Oscarsson, 2002). Overall, there has been a change of values in Sweden in recent decades concerning morality and ethics, not least with regards to questions of equality between different groups in society (Johansson, 2008). In the research on police behaviour, there are also findings indicating that age influences ethical standpoints among recruits as well as how police officers behave in daily practice (Alpert et al., 2004, Phillips, 2015).

In summary, we identify three broad developments that impact professional education and policing; shifts in educational content, shifts in institutional arrangements of education and shifts in the student groups that undergo education and training. Taking these developments as a starting point, the present paper aims to examine the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do police students value what can be defined as 'new' types of learning content in contrast to 'traditional' content in police education?

- RQ2: To what extent do police students consider the 'new' and 'traditional' content to be learnt through their education?

- RQ3: Are there differences in students' attitudes towards educational content with respect to gender, age and the form of their education in terms of university affiliation?

Of these questions, the first two target how police students value and appraise changes of educational content within police education. These questions are important, as educational content that is at variance with the occupational practices and culture of the police runs a considerable risk of being disapproved of by police recruits and, by extension, has little or no impact on student learning. Thus, new ideas regarding policing that are promoted on a policy level may be effectively hindered if they are at odds with students' expectations of policing (Chan, 2001).

In addition to research questions 1 and 2, research question 3 focuses on how educational changes are valued by male and female police students, by students of different ages and by students at traditional police academies versus students at university-based police education programmes. Building on the contextualization in the introduction, this question aims to capture how socio-demographic factors impact how police education is valued and, last but not least, how university affiliation may impact how students value educational content. Regarding this, Sweden makes up an interesting case because the Swedish situation can currently be defined as intermediary, with 2 out of 3 police training locations being university affiliated, whilst the third is configured as a traditional police college, managed 'in-house' by the police. To facilitate an examination of these objectives, the following section provides an operationalisation of what is meant by 'new' and 'traditional' areas of police education.

NEW AND TRADITIONAL AREAS OF POLICE EDUCATION

As stated, a current and central discussion regarding police education involves the training needs and educational essential to modern police education (Marenin, 2004; Paterson, 2011). In this regard, police education has traditionally been geared towards subjects such as crime control and investigation and has had a strong tendency towards *practical*, proficiency-geared training such as self-defence and coercive control techniques. In addition to being practically oriented, police education has traditionally been geared towards institutional socialisation and forming of recruits into police who are *decisive* and capable of acting in their roles as street-level representatives of the state (cf. Conti, 2011). Whilst these orientations still constitute something of a backbone to police education, contemporary research also suggests a current development of new themes and ideas being incorporated into police education.

For instance, it has been suggested that, in light of increased societal complexity, police officers need to be familiar with a range of social-science subjects such as

social justice, social cohesion, human rights and political and ideological transformations in modern societies (Roberg & Bonn, 2004). In short, an increasingly theory-impregnated police education is frequently highlighted in current research as a prerequisite for the development of a police institution that is flexible and well equipped to conduct policing based on informed decisions, critical assessments and evaluations (Marenin, 2004). Thus, it can be concluded that an important current focus of police education is to foster *flexible* police officers who have the ability to think analytically and to be evaluative regarding the consequences of their actions.

In the same way that flexibility is highlighted as an important requisite of contemporary policing, several studies indicate the importance of preparing coming generations of police officers with *communications* training in order to manage police–citizen relationships and meet different demands from the public (Davies & Kelly, 2014). Birzer and Tannehill (2001) highlight how communication entails one of the most important tools for police officers in conflict resolution, wherein the police often find themselves functioning in a mediating role between conflicting values and beliefs.

In addition to the necessary ability to communicate with different societal sub-groups, the literature also indicates that the subject of *diversity* is an important facet of police educational training. In this regard, Allan (2013) describes a need for educators to focus on the fostering of 'global literacy' within police education. Allan discusses this as the development of students' abilities to understand and make sense of socio-politically, culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse contexts. The need to refine such competencies is motivated by increasing global migration with subsequent societal diversity.

In summary, it can be concluded that police education programmes in many countries currently consist of a mix of old and new subject matter. Whilst some police education themes are traditional, other areas of education have a shorter history and could, in this context, be regarded as relatively newly implemented. The brief overview provided above identified three broad notions of the 'new' and currently prioritised topics in the educational discourse that surrounds police education, namely a focus on *diversity*, *communication* and *flexibility.* Likewise, two traditional focus areas of police education were identified in terms of *practice orientation* and in the notion of an action-oriented education that prepared and fostered students for *decisiveness.*

METHOD AND MATERIALS

The following section begins with an outline of the empirical context of our study, in which we introduce recent developments within Swedish police education policy. The section then introduces our empirical survey, which targets how police students' attitudes towards the aforementioned 'new' versus 'traditional' themes of police education are formed. Here we provide details of the participants in the study, the instrument used, our analytical strategy and the chosen variables.

Swedish Police Education

Swedish police education, until 1994, consisted of in-service training. In 1998, the curriculum changed to include aims influenced by academic educations, such as being able to think critically, analyse and solve problems, and evaluate results (Karp & Stenmark, 2011). At that time two universities, Umeå and Växjö, were commissioned to manage basic education for police officers beyond Solna, the traditional location of police education. The education was structured to include five terms. The first four terms are conducted at the three police colleges. The fifth term entails a probation period for students, which is conducted by the police authority and is not part of the formal education carried out by the police colleges.

Participants

To be able to examine police students' attitudes towards educational content based on gender, age and university affiliation of their educational institution, the present study is based on a police student survey collected as part of the European research project Recruitment, Education, and Careers in the Police (RECPOL). The survey was developed in cooperation with the Centre for the Study of Professions at Oslo University College, and data collection included all police students in Sweden (N=369) in spring 2013, when they were in their fourth term of their education. A total of 320 out of 369 police students completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 86%. Out of the 320 participants, 301 responded to the question asking their gender, whereas 19 respondents did not (6%). The survey population was 35% female (n=112) and 59% male (n=189). As previously mentioned, Swedish police education is offered at three institutions, Umeå, Växjö and Solna. Table 1 presents how many female and male students studied at each location.

Table 1: Distribution of students at the three police colleges

Gender	Umeå	Växjö	Solna
Male	39	43	107
Female	23	21	68
Total	62	64	175

Nineteen participants did not provide their year of birth, an omission rate of 6%, representing the same population as those who did not provide their gender. Age distribution ranged from 22 to 43 years.

Instrument

The police student survey covered items focussing on choice of education, attitudes towards knowledge and skills, job values, operational orientation, attitudes about the police profession, political attitudes and values, and background questions. This study explores questions from the survey that concern students' values regarding important skills and knowledge and to which extent they have learned these during their education. The respondents were asked to consider each skill and type of knowledge mentioned in the question in relation to being able to work as a good police officer.

Variables

The dependent variables reflect the required skills—the 'new' skills—that are policy-driven and highlighted in international research as being globally essential, as well as the 'traditional' skills. Three index variables are tested for the 'new' skills: communication, flexibility and diversity. Two index variables are tested for the 'traditional' skills: practical skills and decisiveness. In the survey, the question is formulated as follows: *Below is a list of different types of knowledge and competencies. Could you, for each of them, specify: (A) to what extent this should be emphasised in the education in order to make you a good police officer and (B) to what extent did you learn this in your police education?* Responses were indicated on a scale from 5 (to a very high extent) to 1 (not at all).

Table 2 summarises the confirmatory factor analysis from which all the index variables were formed. The first five index variables are linked to part (A) of the question*, to what extent should this be emphasised in your education in order to make you a good police officer?* For each of these index variables, the same items created five index variables for the (B) part of the question: *to what extent did you learn this in your police education?* Because the questionnaire had already established the factor structure of the instrument, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the construction validity. CFA showed that all items loaded significantly on the constructions/scales (all p-values were less than 0.001). Factor loadings for part (A) varied between 0.504 and 0.813. For part (B), index variables' factor loadings varied between 0.409 and 0.743.

Table 2: Confirmatory factor analysis of five skills

Index Variables and Items	Part A: Important facet of police education		Part B: Learned in police education	
	Coefficient Cronbach's α	CFA Loadings (p <0.0001)	Coefficient Cronbach's α	CFA Loadings (p <0.0001)
Communication	0.646		0.523	
Verbal		0.813		0.743
Written		0.575		0.481
Flexibility	0.677		0.601	
Critically reflect and evaluate work		0.551		0.470
Think in new ways		0.530		0.522
Cooperate with others		0.787		0.702
Diversity	0.837		0.749	
Tolerance: appreciate other viewpoints		0.790		0.745
Make ethical judgements		0.808		0.678
Empathise with others		0.798		0.699
Decisiveness	0.686		0.680	
Work independently		0.504		0.539
Take initiative		0.749		0.729
Take responsibility and make decisions		0.727		0.672
Practical	0.666		0.427	
Occupation-specific knowledge		0.627		0.409
Practical skills		0.790		0.653

Note. CFA = Confirmatory Factor Analysis

ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

The general analysis shows that all items in part (A), the importance of emphasising each skill in the education programme for becoming a good police officer, received mean scores higher than 4.0, and that women assigned higher importance to emphasizing all skills overall. This indicates that the skills tested are considered important to underline in police education.

The mean scores for all index variables in part (B) are lower than those in part (A). Part (B) measures to what extent police students have learned these skills in the police education. A value less than 3.5 indicates that students value their learning of these skills to a lower extent. This comparison demonstrates that they find all skills and items more important to underline in education than they think that they have learned it in the educational setting.

In the inquiry of the index variables the study tested for significant differences (1) in how male and female students score the importance of the skills in the education programme, (2) in respondent scores among police education programmes and (3) between the scores of younger and older respondents.

The analysis consisted of comparing mean scores using independent t-tests between male and female respondents, between the three police colleges in Sweden and between younger and older students. Table 3 presents results from independent t-tests regarding gender and police colleges in part (A). Part (A) showed female respondents assigned higher scores to four of the index variables-; communication, flexibility, diversity and one of the traditional skills, decisiveness. There were no significant differences for the fifth variable, practical skills. This shows a difference in attitudes between female and male students regarding all of the 'new' skills but only one of the traditional ones. Overall, both male and female students value 'new' globally highlighted skills and traditional skills as important to emphasise in police education. All mean scores were higher than 4.0.

Table 3: Mean scores for gender and police colleges - index variables in Part (A)

Variables	Communication Mean (sd)	Flexibility Mean (sd)	Diversity Mean (sd)	Decisiveness Mean (sd)	Practical Mean (sd)
Gender					
Male (n=189)	4.17 (0.79)	4.15 (0.74)	4.06 (0.81)	4.17 (0.68)	4.34 (0.82)
Female (n=112)	4.49 (0.57)*	4.41 (0.52)*	4.36 (0.62)*	4.33 (0.63)*	4.48 (0.64)
College					
Umeå (n=63)	4.17 (0.65)	4.33 (0.56)	4.12 (0.64)	4.20 (0.60)	4.46 (0.65)
Växjö (n=71)	4.18 (0.79)	4.00 (0.73)	4.17 (0.80)	4.15 (0.76)	4.30 (0.86)
Solna (n=186)	4.38 (0.70)*	4.33 (0.64)*	4.21 (0.76)	4.30 (0.63)	4.43 (0.73)

* $p < 0.01$

In contrast to Table 3, Table 4 (below) presents results from independent t-test regarding gender and police colleges in part (B). The examination of the significant differences in part (B) showed only one difference: females assigned a higher score

for flexibility learned. Which means that female students scored this skill higher than males did if they thought that they had learned this skill.

Table 4: Mean scores for gender and police colleges - index variables in Part (B)

Variables	Communication Learned Mean (sd)	Flexibility Learned Mean (sd)	Diversity Learned Mean (sd)	Decisiveness Learned Mean (sd)	Practical Learned Mean (sd)
Gender					
Male (n=189)	3.47 (0.80)	3.62 (0.76)	3.56 (0.77)	3.33 (0.79)	3.70 (0.71)
Female (n=112)	3.56 (0.83)	3.83 (0.71) *	3.62 (0.77)	3.42 (0.72)	3.81 (0.64)
College					
Umeå (n=63)	3.35 (0.78)	3.73 (0.75)	3.30 (0.92)*	3.28 (0.59)	3.67 (0.69)
Växjö (n=71)	3.50 (0.92)	3.49 (0.81)*	3.60 (0.84)	3.38 (0.86)	3.90 (0.78)
Solna (n=186)	3.58 (0.77)	3.77 (0.78)	3.68 (0.75)	3.40 (0.76)	3.73 (0.65)

* p <0.01

As the tables indicate, the test of mean score differences between the police colleges showed that four index variables, two in part (A) (Table 3) and two in part (B) (Table 4), had significantly different results among the three police colleges.

Students in Solna viewed communication skills as more important than students at other police colleges did. The mean scores for Umeå and Växjö were lower. Växjö students considered skill flexibility less important than students in Umeå and Solna. For the index variables concerning the learning part, students in Växjö thought they had learned flexibility to a lesser extent than students in Solna and Umeå. Students in Umeå reported having learned diversity skills less than students in Solna and Växjö. Independent t-test analysis concerning age produced no significant results. In this test, two groups were created for the independent variable, younger (>30) and older (<31).

In summary, the results indicate differences related to gender, place of education and attitudes toward the importance of underlining the skills in education and to which extent the students had learned them in the police education.

DISCUSSION

This paper examines how 'new' types of learning content in contrast to 'traditional' content in police education relate to views basic-training police students hold in Sweden. The research questions were (1) How do police students value 'new' types of learning content in contrast to 'traditional' content in police education? (2) To what extent do police students consider the 'new' and 'traditional' content to be learnt through their education? And 3) are there differences in students' attitudes toward educational content with respect to gender, age and university affiliation?

Concerning the first question, it is obvious that police students in Sweden value both new content—communication, flexibility and diversity—and traditional content, decisiveness and practical skills, as important for becoming a good police officer. The mean scores for all indexes, independent of gender and place of education, are

equal or higher to 4.00 (4.06–4.49), which indicate the content is valued as important. That means that when it comes to students' learning of content in line with policies and curricula, there ought to be a favourable situation to bring the new into play alongside the traditional content. However, when considering the extent to which police students value the content learnt in their education, for all indexes, the mean score is of lower numbers (3.28–3.90). In fact, many of the mean scores are lower than 3.5, which indicates the students do not think they learn the most highly valuable skills. How this should be understood is outside the scope of our data, but a plausible explanation can be found in the research on police socialisation pointing to the fact that police recruits' learning takes place alongside occupational practice, a practice which is valued higher by both practitioners and recruits for learning the skills of policing (Chan, Devery, & Doran, 2003; Alain & Grégoire, 2008). That there will be a probation term conducted by the police authority following the two years of studying at the police college may therefore lead to a kind of mistrust among the students of the significance of content taught at the police college. Another supporting factor to the relative mistrust could be how applicants are selected to the police education programme. With a very high number of applicants and a rigorous selection process (Annell, 2015), it is possible that many of the students in their repertoire bring with them values and skills consistent with the educational content of the programme. Intertwined with that is also the fact that the students have been selected from amongst many others, which can lead to a feeling that they already possess a great amount of knowledge and skills needed for doing good police work (Lauritz & Karp, 2013).

With the overall picture in sight, we now proceed with discussion of the results in relation to location of the education programme, gender and age.

Only the first two variables led to real differences. The results from comparing two age variables had no significant results and indicated no differences among those over and under 30. In this study one of our index variables, diversity could have indicated differences as previous results have shown (Oscarsson, 2002).

When it comes to reasons for the differences related to the location of the education programme, we suggest that preconceptions, the composition of student groups and how content is carried out and prioritised in the academies contribute. As the results show, small but apparent differences in two types of skills, communication (4.38 for Solna and 4.17/4.18 for Umeå/Växjö) and flexibility (4.33 for Umeå/Solna and 4.00 for Växjö) in part (A), where they indicated how important the skills are to underline in education, were related to location of education. In part (B), where they indicated whether they had learned each skill in the education, flexibility (3.77 for Solna and 3.49 for Växjö) and diversity (3.68 for Solna and 3.60 for Växjö) had significant differences in mean scores. In the following, we will start with reflections on the location of education.

When police students apply for an education programme, they have the opportunity to choose their place. As one of the colleges is managed by the police itself and has a long tradition of educating police students, and the two others are affiliated with universities, where they have been integrated in the academic milieu and have a relatively short history as police academies, students' preferences may vary with their attitudes toward policing. That means that students could already differ in

preconception from the start of their education. Students may apply to the education programme that they think could support those most. In these results, students at one of the academic police education programmes scored flexibility as less important to underline in education than students at the other programmes. One argument could be that these students knew from the beginning that police work includes flexibility and that the education programme fulfils this preconception. It is interesting that the scores concerning learning that skill were low, indicating it was not learned in the educational setting. What does this mean? Perhaps teachers and assignments have highlighted this skill but the students think they have not learned it enough during the theoretical part of their education. Students in the more traditional setting put value on communication skills. It could be that these students have discovered this skill to be important for being a good police officer and want more emphasis on it. The students generally could connect the other skills to more traditional methods of police work and expected their education to include these, showing no differences in attitude. As another factor that could be connected to more practical issues, students know that the most practical skills are learned in the fifth term, and this may have also affected how they answered the questions in this questionnaire.

Also, the substance of each education programme may differ according to teachers' approaches to both traditional and 'new' skills. How teachers instruct and how they construct assignments could be two issues related to these differences, and it is essential to look into more.

Let us continue with the question of gender. As the analysis shows, women found all three 'new' skills, and only one of the more traditional skills, more important than male students did. The skill of decisiveness sometimes considered a male trait, inspired the biggest difference. Perhaps in their male role, male police students have already trained themselves in decisiveness during their upbringing, but female students believe that this should get attention so they feel as comfortable with it as male police students do. Previous research (Gilligan, 1982) has also shown that female police officers have to show such 'male' skills for others to accept them as competent police officers.

Previous research concerning women in law enforcement-, as identified two major attitudes: the 'sameness' attitude and the 'difference' (Martin & Jurik, 1996). Research regarding job satisfaction and career plans has shown differences and similarities in attitudes between female and male officers, but areas such as police roles and stress research (Poteyeva & Sun, 2009) confirm differences more explicitly. Our study has shown more differences related to the 'new' policy indicated skills, but not for the more traditional skills. Research by Morash and Haarr (2012) demonstrates that women express they have different attitudes in relation to their role as police officers than male officers do. Previous research has indicated gender differences in regard to police students' career plans, as male students are more dedicated to operational specialised work and patrol work, while female students are more dedicated to preventive and investigative work (Bringsrud Fekjær, 2014). Also, female students rate intrinsic and altruistic job values (i.e., valuing a job because of inherent satisfaction or because of a potential to do well) higher than male students, who value extrinsic job values (i.e., instrumental aspects of a job such as income) higher than their female counterparts (Sundström & Wolming, 2013).

CONCLUSION

The overall findings indicate police students' value learning 'new' policy-driven skills. They scored their learning in both 'new' and traditional skills as low in the police education, which could indicate dissatisfaction with their learning there. This could be in line with research on police socialisation, which indicates that learning in police practices is of more importance than in police educational settings.

As specified at the start of this study, police students may disapprove of policy-driven targets like communication, flexibility and diversity. The results of this study show that female police students want more emphasis on these 'new' skills in educational settings and therefore are more 'change agents' in promoting these skills in their future work life and into police work practice than male police students, which could be seen as a strength for the police profession.

Further research is required. This study has shown differences in values between female and male police students. When it comes to clarifying what circumstances are influencing these attitudes, further questions arise. What is a 'good police officer'? Even the content of each education programme could be of importance to review. The statistical analysis in this study aimed to give an indication for a population concerning age, gender and place of education. For future analysis, multilevel methods could determine which other variables influence attitudes toward educational content. Additional longitudinal research is planned, as is comparison with other European countries.

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